

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A computer-implemented process for assessing the vulnerability of a workstation to a security compromise, comprising the steps:

issuing a request for a scanner from a browser operating on the workstation to a network server via a computer network;

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transmitting the scanner from the network server to the workstation via the computer network, the scanner installable within the browser and operative to complete a vulnerability assessment of the workstation; and

generating workstation credentials in response to the scanner conducting the vulnerability assessment of the workstation.

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2. The computer-implemented process of Claim 1 further comprising the step of presenting the workstation credentials to the user of the workstation.

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3. The computer-implemented process of Claim 1 further comprising the step of transmitting the workstation credentials to the network server via the computer network.

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4. The computer-implemented process of Claim 1 further comprising the step of completing a repair operation by the scanner to address a security vulnerability identified by the scanner in response to completing the vulnerability assessment of the workstation.

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5. The computer-implemented process of Claim 1 wherein the scanner comprises a plug-in control operable with the browser and a data file defining security vulnerabilities.

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6. The computer-implemented process of Claim 1, wherein the step of issuing a request for a scanner comprises the browser issuing a request for a Web page at the network server, the Web page hosting the scanner as a plug-in control available for installation with the browser.

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7. A computer-readable medium comprising the computer-implemented process of Claim 1.

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8. A computer-implemented process for authenticating a workstation requesting a software service, comprising the steps:

5 issuing a request for a scanner to a network server from a browser operating on the workstation;

transmitting the scanner and a workstation policy from the network server to the workstation via the computer network, the scanner installable within the browser and operative to generate workstation credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation;

10 comparing the workstation credentials to the workstation policy on the workstation to determine whether the workstation should be granted access to the software service.

15 9. The computer-implemented process of Claim 8, wherein the step of issuing a request for a scanner comprises the browser issuing a request for a Web page at the network server, the Web page hosting the scanner as a control operable with the browser.

20 10. A computer-readable medium comprising the process of Claim 8.

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11. A computer-implemented process for authenticating a workstation requesting a network service from a network server via a computer network, comprising the steps:

5 issuing a request for a scanner to the network server from a browser operating on the workstation;

transmitting the scanner from the network server to the workstation via the computer network, the scanner installable within the browser and operative to generate workstation credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that would
10 compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network;

transmitting the workstation security credentials from the scanner to the network server via the computer network; and

determining at the network server whether the workstation should be granted access to a network service of the network based on the workstation
15 credentials.

12. The computer-implemented process recited by Claim 11 wherein the network server comprises a CGI script and the step of determining whether the workstation should be granted access to the network service comprises
20 the CGI script comparing the workstation credentials to a workstation security policy maintained at the network server to determine whether the workstation should be granted access to the network service;

if the workstation credentials satisfy the workstation security policy, then authorizing access to the network service and directing the browser to the
25 log-in page via the computer network,

otherwise, denying access to the network service and delivering an access denied page to the workstation via the computer network.

13. A computer-readable medium comprising the computer-
30 implemented process of Claim 11.

14. The computer-implemented process of Claim 11, wherein the step of issuing a request for a scanner comprises the browser issuing a request for a Web page at the network server, the Web page hosting the scanner as a plug-in
35 control available for installation with the browser.

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